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STATE OF LOUISIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CHARLES I. HUDSON
District 40

Vice Chairman, Education
Agriculture
Appropriations

March 4, 2002

02726326

Honorable Michael Powell,
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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01-348

Ref Docket: 01-348

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

I firmly believe that the merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics would provide significant benefits to consumers throughout our state. Over the past 20-years, EchoStar Communications has demonstrated various industry firsts and this newly merged company would be able to continue improving service and quality programming to rural residents everywhere.

The company will be able to effectively compete in an environment against other dominant US cable companies. Currently consumers located in urban areas are offered a choice between cable television and satellite service; people in rural areas are not always fortunate to have a choice. Local-to-local broadcasting will be improved and offered to all markets and quality programming will be able to reach homes, businesses; and schools.

The digital divide that currently exists must be eliminated. High-speed Internet access would be provided through satellite to many rural areas that cable has deemed too expensive to install. This merger will help to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas.

EchoStar's nationwide pricing plan offers customers a fair package or options, including more programming choices, interactive services, and video on demand, at competitive prices.

I urge you to seriously consider the positive effect that this new company would have on our state and nation. Please support the merger favorable and enable all Americans to have the same opportunities and choices no matter where they live.

Sincerely,

Charles Hudson
State Representative, District 40

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